

**Abstract 215**

**TITLE:** Design of an Evaluation Guide for Social and Educational Service Programs in Puerto Rico: Application to HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs

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**ISSUE:** There is great need of service consumers, governmental agencies and private institutions that sponsor intervention projects in the area of human services, to know how the resources for rendering these services are being used what their results are and how these results are impacting the population for whom these services were designed. The scientific evaluation of the programs facilitates learning about their efficiency and effectiveness by providing valid and reliable information for decision making processes and for the optimal use of human and fiscal resources, which in turn brings better rendering of services to the community. These issues are very relevant for HIV/AIDS prevention programs.

**SETTINGS:** This study was done in Puerto Rico with eight programs, 5 were in community based organizations and 3 were programs in governmental settings. The participating programs addressed the psychosocial and educative needs in the area of HIV/AIDS, child abuse, battered women, pre-school education, juvenile delinquency, health and interpersonal conflicts.

**PROJECT:** The objective of this research project was to develop an evaluation guide consistent with the scientific literature in the field and responsive to the needs of the programs. The first phase of the research consisted of a needs assessment study. To obtain this information a Questionnaire for Needs Assessment in the Area of Evaluation for Educational and Social Programs was designed. The second phase was to design an evaluation guide adjusted to the identified needs of the programs. This guide includes the basic steps for planning, designing and implementing a scientifically designed evaluation.

**RESULTS:** The study reflects that community based as well as governmental programs and funding agencies need to carry out evaluations of results, cost-effectiveness, process and needs assessment. Evaluation mechanisms used by these programs answered the questions of administrators and work teams but did not entirely answer the questions that funding agencies had about the effectiveness of the programs.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** The results suggest that it is necessary to strengthen evaluation mechanisms in order to obtain valid and reliable data that helps the programs show their accountability and make decisions to enhance the quality in their services. This is very important for HIV/AIDS prevention and intervention programs on the Island, due to the scarcity of resources dealing with the impact of the epidemic in our community which makes it essential to show auditability in order to acquire more funds. Besides, by scientifically evidencing the effectiveness of these programs, we open new possibilities for these programs to be adapted and adopted by other populations with characteristics similar to ours while maintaining the traits that make them effective.

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